

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 7 and 8 are amended. No new matter is added. Support for the amendments to claims 1, 7 and 8 is found in the specification at, for example, page 16, line 11 to page 17, line 5. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The courtesies extended to Applicant's representative by Examiner Bitar at the interview held December 13, 2007, are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicant's record of the interview.

The Office Action rejects claims 1 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The Office Action also asserts that claims 2-7 and 9-14 are indefinite because they depend from claims 1 and 8.

Claims 1 and 8 are amended to obviate the rejection. As discussed and agreed to during the interview, amended claims 1 and 8 are therefore definite. Claim 7 is amended similarly. Claims 3-6 and 9-17 only depend from rejected claims 1 and 8. As such, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3, 6-10 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0111939 to Kondo et al. Applicant also understands that claim 5 is rejected under this rejection because the Office Action provides grounds for rejecting claim 5. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, a keyword proposing section for proposing the keyword on a display, the keyword which relates to the predetermined object which is acknowledged by the object acknowledging section, and an object information inputting section for confirming by the user, adding, and correcting the keyword which is proposed by the keyword proposing section when the predetermined object acknowledged by the object acknowledging section is

similar to the object in the image previously stored in the database. Claims 7 and 8 each recite, *inter alia*, proposing the keyword on a display, the keyword which relates to the predetermined object which is acknowledged by the object acknowledging section, and confirming by the user, adding, and correcting the keyword which is proposed by the keyword proposing when the predetermined object acknowledged by the object acknowledging section is similar to the object in the image previously stored in the database.

According to the features recited in claims 1, 7 and 8, it is possible to add the keywords to the image efficiently by detecting the inputted objects in the image in the detecting/classifying device for the image. Also, because the keywords that relate to the object in the image are added, it is possible to accurately and efficiently retrieve the image that contains a specific object using the keyword from numerous other images accurately.

The Office Action asserts that Kondo discloses, at paragraph [0084], step S813 in which a name is entered to correspond to the face image, and step S815 in which the face image cut out and the entered name are correlated with each other and thus registered in the face dictionary. Also, the Office Action asserts that Kondo disclosed, at paragraphs [0086] to [0088], steps S811 to S819 which are allegedly equivalent to confirming by the user, adding, and correcting the keyword when the predetermined object acknowledged by the object acknowledging section is similar to the object in the image previously stored in the database. See also FIG. 8 of Kondo. Applicant respectfully disagrees with these assertions.

At step S811 of Kondo, a decision is made as to whether the face image has already been registered in a face dictionary. If the face image has not already been registered at step S811, then a name is entered to correspond to the face image at step S813. After carrying out at the step S813, the face image cut out and the entered name are correlated with each other and thus registered in the face dictionary at step S815, and the program moves on to step

S817. If the face image has already been registered at step S811, then the program skips these steps S813 and S815 and moves on to step S817.

As described above, in Kondo, if the face image has not already been registered, a name is entered to correspond to the face image. On the other hand, if the face image has already been registered, the program skips these steps. Thus, in Kondo, the face image which has already been registered is not proposed to a user at all. Therefore, the user cannot confirm the face image which is skipped in steps S813 and S815.

More specifically, in the case of registering face images of two persons whose names are different from each other but whose faces strongly resemble each other. For example, for images of twins, brothers, or the like, the image data retrieval apparatus of Kondo automatically determines the above-described "the face image has not already been registered" or "the face image has already been registered" without giving the opportunity for the user to confirm the name or the face. Therefore, the image data retrieval apparatus of Kondo automatically determines the above-described decision as to whether the face image has already been registered in a face dictionary (step S811) without arbitrary determination by the user.

In contrast, the subject matter of the pending claims recites that when a predetermined object in the inputted image is acknowledged by the object acknowledging section, the keyword proposing section proposes, on a display, the keyword relating to the predetermined object which is acknowledged by the object acknowledging section. Furthermore. In the object information inputting section, the proposed keyword of the keyword proposing section is confirmed by the user, and the keyword is then added and corrected as needed, *i.e.*, when the predetermined object acknowledged by the object acknowledging section is similar to the object in the image previously stored in the database. As such, even if the face images have been registered in the face dictionary, the user is prompted to confirm the keyword.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that Kondo fails to teach or suggest confirming by the user, adding, and correcting the keyword which is proposed by the keyword proposing section when the predetermined object acknowledged by the object acknowledging section is similar to the object in the image previously stored in the database, as recited in claims 1, 7 and 8. Therefore, claims 1, 7 and 8 are patentably distinct from Kondo.

Dependent claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 12 are allowable at least for their dependence on allowable bases, as well as for the additional features they recite. As such, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

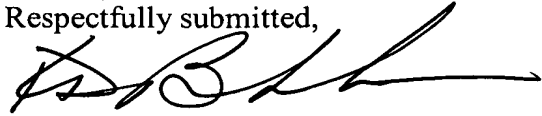
The Office Action rejects claims 4 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Kondo in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,826,316 to Luo et al. (Luo). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Luo does not overcome the deficiency of Kondo with respect to claims 1 and 8. Therefore, claims 4 and 11 are allowable at least for their dependence on allowable base claims, as well as for the additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

Request for Continued Examination
Petition for Extension of Time

Date: December 31, 2007

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